

Minute of Stakeholders' Meeting of Kogi State Action on Business Enabling Reforms (SABER) held on 12th December 2023 at Conference Room, Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning Lokoja.

Attendance

1. Mr Elijah Evinemi	Permanent Secretary AG	Member
2. Hon Ismaila Umar	SSA, ICT	Member
3. Mathew Abuka	DG DMO	Member
4. E.O Bayode	SFTAS Focal Person	Member
5. Ibrahim Halilu. I	Dir. Debt Report	Member
6. Mr Samuel Enejoh	DG KOCCIMA	Member
7. Ibrahim Sulieman Sulieman	Asst Dir TPDB	Member
8. Comrd. Itodo Yusuf	Dir (Admin) KOSIPA	Member
9. Salihu Mustapha. O	Ag. SG BLUD	Member
10. Awuya Patrick A	Ag Dir, Str Plann DMO	Member
11. Sani Daniel	COSS/AD	Member
12. Kareem Yahaya	Ag. DGIS BLUD	Member
13. Abdullateef A Bello	PA HCF	Secretary

- The meeting commenced by 11.45am.
- Opening Prayers was said by DG DMO Mr Mathew Abuka and Hon Ismaila Umar SSA ICT.
- Brief Introduction from all members present.
- The SABER Program Focal Person for Kogi State Mr E. O Bayode, on behalf of the Commissioner of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning gave the opening remarks of the meeting emphasizing the importance of the SABER program while seeking commitment from some members and urge all hands to be on board to help the State achieve the targets and benefits that the program promises. He gave an overview of Kogi States status of the SABER program for the year 2023 and the Kogi State approved BERAP submitted to the SABER secretariat which was not funded and implemented due to many circumstances especially the gubernatorial election activities that unavoidably hindered the process. Mr Bayode once again draw the attention of all members to the importance of completing the draft BERAP and submission before the deadline as one of the Eligibility criteria to participate for SABER in 2024. The BERAP must be approved by the State Executive Council. He complained about some of the BERAP 'Action Steps' not well articulated by some MDA's and advice that responsible MDA's will have to review it during the meeting.

After a brief deliberation by members, a decision was adopted that the 2023 Kogi State BERAP will be reviewed, edited, updated and forwarded as the Kogi State BERAP for the year 2024.

- The 2023 Kogi State BERAP was displayed for members view highlighting the DLIs, Reform Objectives, Action Steps and Budget for review by all MDAs.
- As part of the objectives of reforms for DLI1, the State Focal Person explained that details of search tabs needed to be added on the website for easy access to people seeking to obtain CofO and construction permits with timeframes and cost.

- The Ag Surveyor General Mr Salihu Mustapha suggested that the Webmaster need to create sub-sections to accommodate the new additions for easier searches. He also talked about the quoted Budget suggesting that the budget should be increased as there will be need to carry out mapping or imaging for identifying and capturing of properties in the State which will certainly cost more than the budget stated previously.
Mr Bayode asked the Ag Surveyor General to specify which is more preferable and cost efficient between mapping and imaging.
In response the Ag Surveyor replied that the he can not give an actual cost of either but suggested that imaging will be more expensive than mapping the State landed properties.
Mr Bayode suggested that mapping should be more preferable option out of the two and members agreed to adopt mapping.
- Hon Ismaila asked if there are other likely data to capture after identifying each property? The Ag DGIS. Yahaya Kareem responding to the question said that the coordinates of properties will be captured by the deployment of software application to be operated by adhoc staff that have been trained and deployed to carry out the data capturing exercise.
- The DG KOCCIMA made an observation over the National Consensus project noting that the project also carried out mapping of all landed properties across the entire nation, suggesting the possibility of the State to approach the agency to the data.
- In Response to him: Hon Ismaila expressed worries of the possibility and difficulties in getting access to such data from them he complained about the lack of synergy between States and Federal agencies in most cases.

- Mr Bayode advised the need to move proceed to the costing of the process, he advised and urge that the representatives of all MDAs should apply their professional experience to give estimates of the cost of all the DLIs reiterating that the State doesn't have much time for any feasibility studies on each item.
- The Ag Surveyor General suggested that estimated cost for the mapping will be a little difficult however he agreed an estimate cost can be reached by using the template deployed by Nasarawa State. The members eventually agreed that adhoc staff will be a number of adhoc staff will be assigned to every ward across the State. The cost was eventually tagged at N345,000,000 which includes the purchase of the licensed applications, logistics, training of adhoc staff and so on. Members also suggested that such adhoc staff will use their own mobile devices to carry out the exercise.
- Discussion proceeded to DLI2 which involves the Ease of fiber optics Infrastructure Investment to Private Investors in Kogi State: SSA on ICT Hon Ismaila Umar explained the importance of access to internet for businesses across the State. He emphasized the need to monitor laying of fiber optics by network providers across the State. He suggested that network providers need to provide the State with adequate information on fiber cables laid and the routes they followed. Ag Surveyor General suggested that the cable routes need to be mapped also and the suggested was adopted by all members. The cost budget for the DLI2 was increased and tagged at N250,000,000.
- DLI3: Increased Transparency of Official Fees and Dues: Suggestion was made by the Surveyor General for tax fees to be charged according to what each zone have access to and not flat rates for all. DG KOCCIMA raised an issue over the price control of mineral resources saying that prices are not fixed and only determined by illegal miners. The SABER State Focal person suggested that the Ministry of Mines and Steels should be approached to tackle that issue. Hon Ismaila also suggested that the market board should take the responsibility of harmonizing prices of items.

Members agreed that fees and charges are contained in the State Harmonized Laws and these are the fees that will be published as contained in the Action steps that will be published in the State Website.

- DLI4: Increased Transparency of Fees & Levies for Inter-state trade and increased export certification: In order to reduce multiple taxes, it was suggested that Storage centers to be established in areas where produces are produced and charges to be paid in such locations. DG KOCCIMA advised that numbered vouchers should be given to collectors to reduce cash payments and eliminate road blocks. Members agreed that the Ministry of Information to be added as contributing MDA to sensitize the general public. Marketing Board and KOCCIMA was also added. The cost budget was tagged at N200,000,000 within a one-year timeframe.
- DLI5 Simplified State and Local business tax regime: it was agreed that this DLI objective is basically to establish a single tax body administering tax in the State.
The Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy affairs, Chairmen of the 21 Local Government and DLGs were adopted as contributing MDAs and the cost budget tagged at N200,000,000.
- DLI6: Improve domestic and external competitiveness: Kogi State Enterprises Development Agency and KOCCIMA were added as contributing agency. The Budget cost was left at N500,000,000.
- DLI7: Harmonized and more Transparent taxes: Objective was adopted as the need to merge the State Tax Laws and the Local Government revenue to be into a single document and published on the State and KGIRS websites. The Contributing MDAs involved are the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, State House of Assembly, Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy affairs, Ministry of Justice, the 21 Local Government Chairmen, DLGs and KOCCIMA.

- DLI8: quick determination of commercial disputes: question was raised by the Focal person over the initial budget set at N712,000,000. After a brief deliberation by member with major consideration given to the establishment of multi door court house, acquisition of equipment, employment of at least 4 skilled professionals and their remuneration, the budget was eventually reduced to N150,000,000. The Bureau of Land & Urban Development, Town & Development Board & KOCCIMA were all added as contributing MDAs.
- DLI9: Establishment of skills registry and Talent Development: the SSA ICT suggested the need to establish an Information and Technology Agency (Kogi SITDA) which will assist the State in following a pathway to achieving the objectives of this DLI. Hon Ismaila mentioned that the process is already on by the State EXCO to ratify the establishment of agency. He further explained that when established the agency will assist in training and developing a digital literacy framework and activation of digital legacy centers for development of digital literacy and emerging skills.
Some members raised concerns over the cost of the project asking for clarification on the mode of training considering available resource materials and hardware.
In response, the SSA ICT explained that trainings proposed will be a worldwide certification training IC3 and will be beneficial to civil servants and presentable anywhere across the world. He also mentioned that the State already have three ICT based centers that can be deployed to train workers from different zones and that the budget cost doesn't cover provision of hardware for trainees.
- Furthermore, Mr Sani Daniel made an observation: he spoke generally on the need to be encouraged by the State government by providing necessary devices to assist in working conveniently most especially laptops and other computer devices.

- Mr Bayode in response said that the issue will be taken up. He pointed out that the State workers were provided with laptops during the Public Sector Reforms program.
- The document was adopted as the 2024 BERAP and prepared for onward forwarding to the State EXCO for approval and ratification.
- The closing remarks was given by the State focal person.
- The meeting was called to an end by 3.30pm and refreshment was taken by all members in attendance.



Mukadam Asiwaju Asiru Idris
Chairman



Abdullateef A Bello
Secretary